

Area Moms at Congressional Hearing on Child Safety

by Stephanie Zimmermann - The Chicago Sun-Times

October 4, 2004

Two Chicago area mothers are scheduled to testify at a congressional hearing Wednesday on whether the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission does enough to protect consumers -- especially young consumers.

Linda Ginzel, a University of Chicago professor whose 16-month-old son, Danny Keysar, was killed in a recalled portable crib, is set to testify, as is Lisa Lipin, a Skokie mom who has waged a campaign against a toy that nearly strangled her then-5-year-old son, Andrew, in 2003.

Also expected to testify is CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton, as well as a representative of the toy industry.

The hearing was organized by **U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky** (D-Ill.), the ranking Democrat on the House Commerce and Energy Committee's subcommittee on commerce, trade and consumer protection, which oversees the CPSC.

Schakowsky has introduced legislation calling for the government -- rather than private industry -- to set safety standards for durable infant and toddler products such as portable cribs, high chairs, car seats and strollers, and test them before they reach store shelves.

"Our children are really used as test dummies. There are no prior testing requirements" on most children's products, **Schakowsky** said. Even so, most parents believe these products have been tested and certified as safe, she said.

Schakowsky cited CPSC statistics that an average of 65 children under 5 die each year in accidents involving nursery products. In 2001, an estimated 69,500 kids under 5 were treated in emergency rooms for injuries from nursery products.

Lipin's campaign against "yo-yo water balls," toys that feature a liquid-filled rubber ball on the end of a stretchy cord, has gotten several major retailers to pull the toys.

She has repeatedly called for the CPSC to go beyond the advisory it issued in September 2003, and undertake a full product recall, citing more than 380 reported injuries the toys have caused.